



Minutes

WATER RESOURCES ADVISORY COMMISSION Recreational Issues Meeting

June 13, 2016, 5:00 PM
3301 Gun Club Road
West Palm Beach, 33406

1. Welcome, Opening Remarks and Purpose of Meeting - Newton Cook, Chairman

Chairman Cook called the meeting to order at 5:03 p.m. A roundtable introduction was conducted.

2. Emergency High Water Actions Critical to Everglades Wildlife & Habitat Recovery: James M. Erskine, Everglades Coordinator, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission

Mr. Erskine of the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission discussed the 2016 Emergency high Water Actions and FWCs criteria for closure of the WCAs 2&3.

Comments

Stakeholders had concerns and questions on whether water storage was planned for Holeyland and Rotenberger Wildlife Management Areas.

3. Overview of the Wounded Warrior Outdoors Program: Mike Little and Will Little, Hunt Leaders, Wounded Warrior Outdoors

Mr. Mike Little, along with his son Will Little, gave an overview of the organization and how wounded veterans are able to participate in alligator hunting in the STAs.

Comments:

The presentation was well received by all. Participants thanked Mike and Will Little for their work and commended their organization which gives veterans an outlet and opportunity to participate in hunts.

4. Floating Turtle Island Project WCA 2 - Proposed Volunteer Project: Gerald Motes & Bishop Wright, Florida Sportsman's Conservation Association.

An overview of the proposed product and how these can be used to create artificial floating islands in the Everglades for turtle nesting was presented.

Comments:

Stakeholders requested approval to start one pilot project, and would also seek approval from other appropriate agencies. Staff responded that they would pass this request on to the District's Everglades Restoration Section for review of the concept.

5. Fish and Bird Utilization of the STAs and Active Marsh Improvement Project: Mark Cook, Environmental Scientist Lead, Everglades Systems Assessment Section, Water Resources Division, SFWMD

Mr. Cook outlined the on-going study of how wildlife (birds, fish, and alligators) may impact phosphorus cycling within the STAs. In addition, the presentation included an overview of the Everglades study to remove cattails to improve wildlife utilization of open marshes within the Glades.

Comments

The presentation was very well received by the Stakeholders. General comment ensued.

6. Public Lake Kissimmee Volunteer Shelter Project: Brad Weihrauch, Kissimmee River Valley Sportsmen's Association.

An overview of the picnic shelter recently installed on District Lands as part of a volunteer project was presented. The shelter is located on the west shore of Lake Kissimmee. Working collaboratively with all agencies, Mr. Weihrauch was pleased to report that the shelter was constructed in less than six months.

Comments:

Participants applauded the cooperation and teamwork of all those involved and stated that it was a great project. General comments ensued.

7. Public Use Program Updates: Jerry Krenz, Sr., Planner, Land Stewardship Section, Field Operations and Land Management Division.

Updates included public use projects and the expansion of waterfowl and alligator hunting opportunities for the upcoming season.

Comments:

A request was made to the District to assist with marking trails thru dense cattails into the STAs for the waterfowl hunting program. Staff will review access with stakeholders and FWC prior to the start of the season.

Clarification was provided on the use of county wide alligator permits in District canals. Staff will work with FWC on modifying the information on where County permits may be used.

Participants thanked Jerry for a well-informed presentation. General comments ensued.

8. Recreation Discussion, Updates, and Future Meeting Topics

Future Possible Meeting Topics

- a. A request to brief stakeholders on the permitting process for docks and fences installed on lakes and who is liable. Stakeholders would like to learn more about this procedure.
- b. A request for FWC to report on current deer recruitment, population surveys, and the wildlife benefits of the 2016 High Water Emergency Actions was asked for.

Updates:

Chairman reminded everyone of the upcoming FWC meeting. Those that have an interest in bear hunts are encouraged to attend.

Chairman also mentioned that stakeholders are waiting to hear back from FWC on results of the waterfowl hunting TAG working group.

Staff Updates:

- The Cobett levee turnouts are completed.
- The C-18 gate just east of Corbett is open to a small boat ramp and County parking area.
- Two prescribed burns were recently completed on the Kissimmee River.
- Informed participants about the Saturday June 18th volunteer equestrian trail marking project at DuPuis.
- Working on adding an additional restroom to the Dupuis equestrian campground, repairs to the barns, replacing the paddocks, and adding two new picnic shelters.

Other business:

Chairman reminded participants that the next WRAC Recreational meeting is scheduled for **September 12th**. This meeting will be held in Broward County. Exact location will be posted on the District's website along with the agenda.

9. Adjourn 7:59 p.m.